

State of Idaho
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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NEWS RELEASE

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Idaho Department of Insurance Reports Mid-Year Statistics on Recoveries for Insurance Consumers

(July 12, 2006, Boise, ID) –During the first six months of 2006, the Idaho Department of Insurance handled 496 written consumer complaints relating to insurance companies, and assisted insurance consumers in recovering more than \$767,000 in insurance premiums, claim payments, and fees owed them by insurance companies.

In 2005, the Idaho Department of Insurance received, processed, and closed 1,045 written consumer complaints. The Department assisted consumers in recovering \$3,312,491, which represented a significant jump over recoveries for 2004 of \$1,511,967 arising out of 1,284 complaints. While 2005 was an exceptional year for recovering insurance consumer dollars, at just past the halfway point, it appears recoveries for 2006 may exceed most previous years.

“While the majority of insurance claims are handled fairly by insurers, these numbers show that it pays to contact the Department of Insurance when an insurance problem or question does arise,” said Acting Director Shad Priest. “The Department has a staff of trained specialists available to help Idaho insurance buyers.”

Last year, auto liability was the coverage that caused the most complaint activity followed by those related to individual and group health insurance, life insurance and homeowner coverages. The top five complaint categories were listed as unsatisfactory claim settlement offers (30%), denial of claims (19%), delays in the claim handling process (18%), and premium, rating, cancellation issues (11%). According to data compiled by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), the top five types of complaints nationally are claim payment delays (22%), claim denials (19%), unsatisfactory settlement offers (14%), and premium, rating, cancellation issues (13%).

The Department tracks Idaho complaint data annually to look for patterns and trends that could signal problems for consumers.

Idaho insurance consumers may file a complaint or make an inquiry, by calling toll free 1-800-721-3272, or in Boise, call 334-4250. Written complaints or inquiries should be sent to: Idaho Department of Insurance P.O. Box 83720 Boise Idaho 83720-0043. Complaints may also be filed online, at the website below.

Department of Insurance publications and a range of insurance information for consumers, including a copy of the consumer complaint form are also available on the Department’s web site at: www.doi.idaho.gov